

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Knipe/Johnson Farm

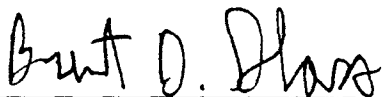
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 606 DeKalb Pike not for publication N/A
city or town Upper Gwynedd Twp vicinity N/A
state Pennsylvania code PA county Montgomery code 091
zip code 19454

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



October 3, 2000

Signature of certifying official

Date

Brent D. Glass, Executive Director, PA Historical & Museum Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register ☐

(See continuation sheet).

☐ determined eligible for the _____
National Register

(See continuation sheet).

☐ determined not eligible for the _____ National Register
☐ removed from the National Register _____

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
--------------	-----------------

<u>6</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>6</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Agriculture/Susistence	Animal facility
Agriculture/Subsistence	Processing

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Agriculture/Subsistence	Animal Facility
Agriculture/Subsistence	Processing
Agriculture/Subsistence	Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial/Georgian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation	Stone/fieldstone
Roof	Asphalt
Walls	stucco
Other	

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.

- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Architecture
Archaeology—Historic, Non-Aboriginal

Period of Significance c1790 - 1949

Significant Dates c.1840

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government

— University
— Other
Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 108 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	478420	4452315	3	18	478740 4451380
2	18	479100	4451820	4	18	478080 4451860

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title:	Nadine Miller Peterson and Phil Ruth			Date:	6/8/00
organization				Telephone	215-721-2624
street & number	253 West Broad Street			Zip code	18964
city or town	Souderton	state	PA		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture
Street & number 700 Butler Ave Telephone

city or town Doylestown state PA Zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

Knipe/Johnson Farm
Montgomery County, PA

The Knipe/Johnson Farm contains a c. 1840 residence, c. 1840 Pennsylvania bank barn, c. 1790 stone springhouse, three c. 1940s agricultural support buildings, and modern metal storage building. The nominated property encompasses approximately 108 acres and is located at the intersection of Dekalb Pike (State Route 202) and Welsh Road (State Route 63) in Upper Gwynedd Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Contributing resources include the residence, barn, springhouse, and three agricultural support buildings. The modern metal storage building, located southwest of the residence and barn, does not contribute to the significance of the property. Acreage currently used for crops and passive woodland surround the complex. This open space lends the property its agricultural feeling and association in a township that is increasingly being developed with modern tract housing, gas stations, and strip-malls. Enveloped in a grove of trees, the residence consists of three sections, with the middle stone portion appearing to be the first erected c. 1840. This main block of the residence is two bays wide by two bays deep. It was expanded to include a one bay by two bay stone addition on its east facade (c. 1890) and a one bay by two bay concrete block addition on its west facade (c. 1940). Porches are situated on its south, east, and west facades. The main block of the residence is indicative of a double-cell plan Georgian residence. The stone Pennsylvania bank barn sits south of the residence and retains much of its original detailing including massing, stone construction, and banked entrance. A concrete block milk shed has been appended to its west facade. A stone springhouse is situated approximately 240 feet southeast of the residence while three c. 1940s agricultural support buildings are situated south and west of the residence. The Knipe/Johnson Farm is highly intact and remains an excellent example of a mid-nineteenth century farmstead in Montgomery County.

The Knipe/Johnson residence is a two-story, side gabled, stone building executed in a simple version of the Georgian style. The house sits on a stone foundation, has stuccoed stone walls, and an asphalt composition shingled roof. The original portion of the house (constructed of stone) sits in the center with a slightly smaller historic addition (constructed of stone) off of the east gable end and a concrete block addition off of the west gable end. All of the components of the house are sheathed in a consistent layer of stucco. The evolution of the house is expressed in the existence of the succession of additions. Each addition has been applied to blend into the overall massing of the residence to form a somewhat symmetrical main facade. A single entryway is situated on the original portion of the main facade with a shed roofed porch on a concrete block base. The porch has two wooden supports and a central gable. A late-twentieth-century wrought iron balustrade encircles the porch. A stuccoed, brick-topped chimney is situated on the ridgeline of the roof where the concrete-block addition joins the original portion of the residence.

The historic stone addition on the east gable has one, two-over-two double hung window situated on each story of the facade and the rear eave walls. The east gable end has a large stuccoed stone end chimney and two attic level, four-pane windows. Both the first and second story have two,

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two-over-two double hung windows. The first story of the stone addition has a central doorway. Extending off of the first story is a shed roofed porch with four wooden supports, a late-twentieth-century wrought iron balustrade, and a corrugated metal roof. At the rear of the building, in the small ell formed by the original portion and the historic addition, is a small enclosed, shed roofed, concrete block entryway (c. 1940).

The gable end of the concrete block addition has paired two-over-two double hung windows on the first story with a centrally situated entryway that is covered by a gabled porch with wooden supports and a raised concrete block base. There are two attic-level, four-pane hooded windows in this gable end. The north, or rear, of the house has two small windows on the first story and two larger windows on the second; all windows are two-over-two double hung.

The interior of the residence is organized around the c. 1840 central core of the house which appears to have been constructed first. The central core is indicative of a double-cell plan Georgian residence, which is more typical of urban dwellings. The double-cell house consists of two rooms on both the first and second floors, oriented front to back rather than side to side (Lanier and Herman 1997: 18). No evidence of the original fireplace or stairwell can be detected within this central core. The central core currently contains a living room and kitchen on the first level and bedrooms on the second level. Little original interior detailing is retained, except for what appears to have been an original window opening in the east façade that is currently enclosed as a bookcase. A late nineteenth century addition (c. 1890) has been constructed on the east facade. The addition consists of a stairwell constructed immediately east of the central core with a single room on the first floor and a bedroom and bathroom on the second floor. A mid-twentieth century (c. 1940) concrete block addition has been constructed on the west side of the central core. This addition currently houses an apartment that contains an entryway and kitchen on the first floor and two rooms on the second floor.

Several additional buildings are situated on the property. A stone barn is situated southwest of the residence. The barn is a large, gabled, Pennsylvania bank barn constructed primarily of uncoursed stone on a stone foundation. The roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets and the gables and forebay of vertical plank siding. The northwestern eave wall has an earthen bank with stone retaining walls leading to a large pair of hinged plank doors which have been shortened. The gable ends have two single plank doors at the base and three narrow vertical vents at the bottom of the planked upper portions. The southeastern eave wall has a large planked forebay with three pairs of centrally situated hinged doors which decrease in size from bottom to top. The base has a series of eight modern windows. Situated in the right-hand corner is a vertical plank door. Situated at the northern corner of the banked end of the barn is a small one story, concrete block milkhouse with an asphalt shingle pyramidal roof. The milkhouse appears to date to c. 1925. The

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Knipe/Johnson Farm
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northeastern side of the milkhouse has a single entryway and an oblong one-over-one window. The northwestern side has two oblong one-over-one windows. A tall, narrow block chimney is situated at the southern corner.

The interior of the barn does appear to have been updated around the turn of the twentieth century and into the early 1940s. Much of the interior framing on the upper floor appears to have replaced the original around the turn of the twentieth century. It is possible that the forebay on the east façade may have been shortened to be flush with the stone end-walls at this time. This configuration (stone gable-end walls enclosing the frame forebay) has given the barn a more massive appearance. Other changes in the interior of the barn appear to have taken place during the early 1940s. These include reconfiguration of the cattle stanchions on the interior with a corresponding insertion of new and replacement windows on the east façade of the barn. A series of four doors were enclosed with small, square windows to create a row of eight somewhat uniformly shaped square windows along the east façade. This change appears to correspond with the interior reconfiguration, possibly allowing more light and ventilation for an increasing number of dairy herd during the early-to-mid twentieth century.

A springhouse that appears to have been constructed during the late eighteenth century, is approximately 240 feet southeast of the residence and barn. The springhouse is constructed of stone with a frame gable roof. The springhouse was most likely constructed contemporaneously with an earlier dwelling situated on the property during the 1790s. Above-ground remnants of this dwelling could not be detected via a field view due to cultivated cornfields.

Several c. 1940s agricultural support buildings are situated on the property. A contributing gambrel roof barn is situated to the southwest of the bank barn. The gambrel roofed barn is constructed of concrete block on the first story and frame eaves covered with asbestos shingling on the second story. The roof is covered with asphalt composition shingles. The northwestern gable end has a large, centrally-situated plank door leading to the loft and a covered aperture above the door. The first story has a pair of centrally located, sliding, plank doors with a single hinged, plank door to the right and a single four-pane window to the left, covering them. The overhang is of frame construction with metal poles as supports. It is covered with corrugated metal. The southeastern eave wall has four evenly spaced, vertical plank doors on the first story with a long shed roofed overhang metal sheeting.

A contributing large concrete block, single bay garage is situated to the northwest of the residence. The garage has an asphalt composition shingle gabled roof. The southwestern gable end has one large, multi-paned garage door. The southeastern eave wall has five, four-pane windows and a single hinged plank door. A small shed roofed office with a single door and a pair of one-over-one double hung windows extends off the northwestern facade.

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A contributing two story concrete block barn that has been altered as an office (c. 1990), is situated to the southwest of the garage. The southeastern gable end has a second story plank door that has been permanently closed and now houses an oblong one-over-one double hung window. A garage doorway in the apex of the gable has also been closed and houses a single window. The northwestern gable end has a single one-over-one double hung window in the apex and one in the second story. A small ell-shaped addition has been added to the gable end at the second story level. The frame addition is covered with asbestos shingles and is supported by wooden posts. The addition has a shed roof covered with asphalt shingles. The smaller portion of the ell is a concrete block portion of the building reached by a set of frame steps and has a single door and a single window. The remainder of the addition has a few small single pane windows. The southeastern eave wall has a row of nine one-over-one windows situated just below the eave. The roof of the building is covered with standing seam metal. A modern metal shed has been constructed south of the barn/offices and does not contribute to the significance of the property.

Landscape features help define the agricultural feeling of the property. The residence, barn and outbuildings are clustered near the center of the property, with large agricultural fields surrounding the complex. A gravel driveway accesses the center of the complex from the east off of Dekalb Pike and a bituminous driveway accesses the property from the west off of Welsh Road. Modern aerial photos (c. 1981) and a current field view show that the 108 acres within the boundary of the property includes a variety of uses such as wooded areas, crops and passive open space. Contributing resources include the residence, Pennsylvania Bank Barn, springhouse, and c. 1940s agricultural support buildings. A modern metal storage building (c. 1990) situated southwest of the barn does not contribute to the significance of the property. The property is a combination of eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century resources that have been reconfigured over-time to fit the use of the owners. The evolution of the farm and the needs of its inhabitants are evident in the alterations to the residence and outbuildings. Rather than being a detraction from the integrity of the property, these alterations (i.e. c. 1890 and 1940 additions to the residence, early twentieth century changes to the barn, and construction of c. 1940s outbuildings) outline the changing needs of the owners to maintain the property as a livable and viable agricultural farm property well into the late twentieth century.

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Knipe/Johnson Farm
Montgomery County, PA

The Knipe/Johnson Farm is significant under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places for its association with Montgomery County and southeastern Pennsylvania agriculture. The property is significant under Criterion C for its architecture. The residence retains features that exemplify stylistic characteristics of the Georgian double-cell plan while the barn is an example of a Pennsylvania bank barn. The Knipe/Johnson Farm is also eligible under Criterion D for Archaeology—Historic, Non-Aboriginal. The existence of the c1790 springhouse along with documentary evidence from the Direct Tax records of the existence of an early house on the property demonstrates potential for archaeological significance. The property is significant for the period 1790-with the construction and ends in 1950, following the National Register 50-year guideline. Its association with the agricultural history of the region is evident in its design, layout, and man-made and landscape features.

The land which would one day constitute the Knipe/Johnson Farm was apparently not adapted to agricultural purposes or built upon until at least 1737. In that year, its Welsh Quaker owner, Hugh Evans, sold it as part of a larger tract to another Welshman named Robert Lloyd. In the accompanying deed (Mathews 1885) it was noted that the northeastern boundary of Lloyd's new 150-acre tract was marked by "the Welsh Road" (also known today as "Route 63"), which was laid out around 1711 to give Gwynedd's inhabitants access to mills along the Pennypack Creek (Alderfer 1951:93). The tract's southeastern boundary followed a road opened to the public nine years earlier, which led from the Quaker meetinghouse at Gwynedd Corners to the Welsh Baptist settlement in Montgomery Township. This was the precursor of a piece of roadway known to later generations as "Swedesford Road," "the Montgomery Road," "the State Road," "Dekalb Pike," and "Route 202" (Ruth 1991:29).

Little is known about Robert Lloyd beyond the fact that he had married Catherine Humphrey, a Gwynedd resident, under the auspices of the Gwynedd Friends Meeting in 1835. His payment of a relatively modest £150 for Hugh Evens' 150 acres suggests that the property had not yet been "improved" (Mathews 1885). Lloyd held the property for 24 years, before moving to the Blockley section of Philadelphia and selling his Gwynedd farm to a German miller named Adam Hoffman in 1761. Hoffman paid £295 for Lloyd's farm, nearly twice what Lloyd had paid for it (Mathews 1885). This strongly suggests that Lloyd significantly improved the property during his 24-year-stay, and very likely built some kind of residence upon it, if not additional buildings, such as a barn and a springhouse. Hoffman was one of the first Germans to settle in the Welsh-Quaker bastion of Gwynedd. In the next half-century, so many other Germans would arrive that by the time of the American Revolution Gwynedd's population would be divided almost evenly between German-Americans and Welsh-Americans (Ruth 1991:27-28).

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Knipe/Johnson Farm
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Hoffman and his wife Christiana held the former Hughes farm for only two years. During that time, the value of the property increased 30%, indicating that the Hoffmans stepped up Lloyd's pace of improvement (Montgomery County Deed Book 273:1). It is likely that either the Hoffmans or Lloyd erected the farm's first substantial residence near a spring in the eastern third of the property, around the headwaters of a little tributary of the Wissahickon Creek later "called Haines Run." A springhouse standing today approximately 240 feet south of the present farmhouse on the property was probably built within a stone's throw of the earlier residence (as a mid-eighteenth-century southeastern Pennsylvania farmhouse, the original residence on this property would have been built facing southward, within easy reach of an unfailing spring). Maps of Gwynedd Township published in 1848 and 1893 indicate that a residence stood in this vicinity as of those years (Morris 1848; Smith 1893). The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 recorded the presence on the property, in that year, of a single dwelling, two stories tall, constructed of wood, measuring 24 by 16 feet, and lighted by four windows. This building was attended by a log barn measuring 30 by 78 feet. An investigation of Gwynedd Township tax records covering the years 1785 through 1834 strongly suggests that during that period the two-story wood dwelling recorded in the Federal Direct Tax assessment of 1798 was the only residence standing on this farm during that period.

The Hoffmans sold the 150-acre farm in 1763 to fellow German Johannes Kneip for £387 (Montgomery County Deed Book 273:1). Kneip may have been related to the Hoffmans through marriage. Church records indicate that he married Anna Barbara Hoffman of the New Hanover Lutheran Church congregation in 1749, less than a year after his voyage from Rotterdam to Philadelphia. A month before his purchase of the Hoffman farm in May 1763, Kneip's wife gave birth to the couple's fifth child (and fifth son), who was given the name "Frederick." The four older boys were John, Henry, Christian, and David. In 1766 a sixth son, Joseph, would arrive, followed by an only daughter, Mary (Lehman 1930). Johannes and Barbara's two oldest sons, John and Henry, apparently saw little future for themselves on their parents' Gwynedd farm, which was too small to be divided into six viable farms (one for each Knipe son). John eventually moved to Scheafferstown, Lebanon County, where he operated a farm of his own. Henry is reported to have moved to Virginia. That left Christian, David, Joseph, and Frederick as potential inheritors of the family farm (Lehman 1930).

Christian "Knipe" (as the family name had been Anglicized) took himself out of the picture in 1789 when he moved with his wife Mary and their handful of children onto a farm just a few hundred yards south of his boyhood home (the northeastern boundary of this farm was defined by the road known today as "Hancock") (Mathews c. 1882). That same year, Johannes Kneip drew up a will in which he directed that "the part of the estate where I now dwell" be given to David, the oldest son still living on the farm. The westernmost third of the farm ("the back part of my plantation"), comprising 50 acres, was to go to next-eldest son Joseph, or, "if he declines to take it, it shall go to my son Frederick." Johannes died in 1792, shortly after which five local men viewed

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“the back part” of the Knipe plantation and appraised it at £262, 10 shillings. There were as yet no buildings on this part of the property. The intended recipient of this parcel—Joseph—declined to accept it as part of his inheritance, so the land was conveyed to his younger brother Frederick. Apparently the acreage was also of limited use to Frederick, who was not yet married and was destined to make his living as a carpenter. Frederick turned around in 1795 and sold the eastern half of the 50-acre parcel to his 34-year-old brother David, who had inherited the majority of the homestead (Mathews 1885).

By this time David Knipe was married to Mary Raker, and the couple had at least a few children (there would eventually be nine) (Lehman 1930). Since at least 1791, David had been taxed not only on his land and his handful of horses and cows, but on a still. His brothers and neighbors Joseph and Christian also paid taxes on stills during the 1790s and into the first years of the nineteenth century, suggesting that distilling was something of a Knipe family specialty. Township tax records also indicate that the David Knipe farm comprised 125 acres for two decades beginning in 1795, during which time the farm’s taxable livestock typically amounted to two horses and five or six head of cattle. David Knipe was not around for the last decade of this period, however. He died in 1806, having reached only 45 years of age. His widow, Mary, who was not yet 40, had just given birth to the last of the couple’s nine children, who were John Ried, Hannah, David, Conrad, Daniel, Catherine, Eliza, Jacob, and William. The eldest child and son, John R., took over the management of the farm following his father’s death. He was probably no older than 20 at the time (Lehman 1930).

From 1807 to 1815, widow Mary Knipe paid township taxes on “the David Knipe Estate,” while her bachelor son John ran the family farm. Then, in 1815, Mary remarried (her new husband was George Shieve), and son John became the resident taxpayer (Lehman 1930). At the time of this switch, the farm’s size was reduced to 104 acres. It is not clear what happened to the lost 21 acres. Several acres were reattached in 1820, configuring the farm at 107 or 108 acres, the size it would retain for the next 125 years.

John R. Knipe either died or moved to another township around 1823, as taxes were paid between 1823 and early 1831 on “the John R. Knipe Estate.” In 1831, the farm was acquired by Charles I. Colloday, who had just purchased a farm on the Montgomery Township side of the Gwynedd-Montgomery border. Colloday appears not to have taken up residence on the former David Knipe farm. In 1832, the township tax on the 108-acre property was paid on his behalf by a Gwynedd Township neighbor. According to a local historian, Colloday “was unfortunate in his financial affairs” (Mathews 1885). This contention is supported by two entries in the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Deed Book D, in which legal action was taken against Colloday by John B. Johnson. In the first entry, dated April 17, 1832, Sheriff Henry Longaker acknowledged a deed conveying the former David Knipe farm, encompassing 108 acres and 74 perches, to Evan Jones. In the second entry, dated the same day, the Sheriff acknowledged a

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Knipe/Johnson Farm
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deed conveying a farm encompassing 112 acres, 30 perches, to John B. Johnson (Montgomery County Sheriff's Deed Book D:181-182). This suggests that the former Knipe farm was first channeled through a third party—perhaps one of Colloday's creditors—then into the hands of John B. Johnson, with an addition of approximately 4 acres.

John Burnand Johnson was no stranger to the former Knipe farm. He had grown up in Gwynedd Township, and in December 1823 he had married David and Mary Knipe's sixth child, Catherine. As a young man, Johnson had relocated to the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia, where he "followed the trade of coach building, constructing the kind of vehicles that were used as stage and mail coaches" (Roberts 1904:99; Mathews 1885). He was about 35 years old and living in Philadelphia when he purchased his wife's childhood home in 1832. By that time he and Catherine had five children. Within 14 years, six more children would arrive (Roberts 1904:99). Inasmuch as tax records refer to a single dwelling on this farm between the years 1785 and 1834, with no sudden increase in property value that might signal the erection of a new stone house to replace the eighteenth century wooden homestead during that time, it appears that John B. Johnson erected at least the core of the present stone farmhouse sometime after 1834. A map of the area published in 1848 showed two residences standing on either side of the end of the lane leading into the farm from Swedesford Road (Morris 1848). Given the present positions of the stone farmhouse and the springhouse, this map supports the conclusion that the older wooden residence stood adjacent to the springhouse, and the newer stone residence was built approximately 240 feet to the north between 1834 and 1848.

The John B. Johnson farm would be a fixture on the Gwynedd landscape for the remainder of the nineteenth century, as partially evidenced by township maps published in 1848, 1877, and 1893 (Morris 1848; Scott 1877; Smith 1893). Agricultural schedules of censuses compiled for 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 provide data on the Johnson family's farm production for the years preceding those dates, while placing them in the context of farm production throughout Gwynedd Township and Montgomery County (United States Bureau of Census 1850b, 1860, 1870, 1880). The data indicate that only about 15 acres of the farm was left in an "unimproved" state (the woodlot, no doubt), while the remaining acreage was employed on a rotating basis in the production of crops then standard in southeastern Pennsylvania: wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, Irish potatoes, and hay. The latter was used to feed the family's herd of dairy cattle, which generally numbered about eight. This was an average-sized herd of milk cows in Gwynedd Township during an era which was characterized locally by an increasing concentration on dairying. As the market for butter increased, the family used some milk to make butter. Other products reflected on agricultural schedules compiled for the farm between 1850 and 1880 included poultry, eggs, swine, apples, and grapes.

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Knipe/Johnson Farm
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The Johnson family's growing specialization in dairy production during and after the Civil War was part of a larger agricultural trend in southeastern Pennsylvania. A principal factor in this trend was the opening of railroads throughout the eastern and midwestern United States, which allowed perishable farm produce to be transported to markets relatively quickly and over greater distances. As railroads reached westward into Ohio, Indiana, and beyond, midwestern farmers with the advantage of larger and more level farms began flooding markets with less-expensive grain products. Many eastern farmers responded initially by shifting from grain production to the raising of cattle and feed, particularly hay. For Montgomery County farmers, neighboring Philadelphia, with its vast horse population, represented a virtually insatiable market for hay (Rapp 1983:1273). Hay presses were built at almost every stop along the North Pennsylvania Railroad, which extended northwestward out of Philadelphia, through Montgomery County, and into the Lehigh Valley following its opening in 1857. The railroad placed one of its stations at North Wales, approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the Johnson farm. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, many farmers with access to the North Pennsylvania Railroad (and thus the ever-growing Philadelphia market) capitalized on this proximity by specializing in the most perishable of dairy and garden products, which could be whisked to city kitchens in an hour or two (Rapp 1983:1273).

As of 1868, John and Catherine Johnson's 28-year-old son Francis (or "Frank") was the only son still living at home. In that year he married Mary Elizabeth Lawrence of nearby Whitpain Township, and brought her to live with him on the Johnson farm. At this time he began renting the property from his father, who used this occasion to retire. John B. Johnson died eight years later (in 1876), having devised by his will "all the rest, residue, and remainder of my Estate, Real and Personal and mixed whatsoever and wheresoever, I give, devise, and bequeath to my ten [surviving] children" (Montgomery County Deed Book 271:488). Francis and Mary remained on the farm five more years, bringing four children into the world, then purchased and moved to a smaller farm in the southwestern part of Gwynedd Township in 1881 (Roberts 1904:99).

As executors of John B. Johnson's will, his sons William B. and Charles J. needed to find a buyer for the now-vacant property. They found one in John B. Johnson's grandson, who was also named John B. Johnson (Mathews 1885). With his purchase of the property in 1883, the farm could once again be accurately referred to as "the John B. Johnson farm" (Montgomery County Deed Book 271:488). The junior John B. Johnson did not have his grandfather's staying power. In 1892, a year after Gwynedd Township was divided into Upper and Lower Gwynedd Townships (with Swedesford road serving as the dividing line), the Montgomery County Sheriff seized the property and granted it to Norristown residents Nicholas and Ida Larzelere (Ruth 1991:109). The Larzeleres turned around and conveyed it the following year to The Norristown Title Trust and Safe Deposit Company (Montgomery County Deed Book 371:720). The next year (1893), Charles F. Andrews of Chestnut Hill purchased the farm, apparently to serve as a seasonal residence, "country seat," or "gentleman farm" (Montgomery County Deed

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Book 371:720). During the late 1800s and early 1900s, many Upper and Lower Gwynedd farms were purchased in this manner by well-to-do "city folk" (Ruth 1991:110-111).

As a gentleman's farm, the former Knipe homestead passed from Charles and Julia Andrews to fellow Philadelphian George J. Bodine in 1910 (Montgomery County Deed Book 624:211). Bodine died in 1912, and four years later his heirs conveyed the farm to another Philadelphian, Louis J. Kolb (Montgomery County Deed Book 746:242). Kolb was no stranger to the property. He had grown up on the neighboring farm to the south (listed on the National Register as "The Isaac Kulp Farm"). His widowed mother Olivia and sister Wilhelmina still lived there as of 1916 (Montgomery County Deed Book 898:114).

Louis Kolb lived on the 108-acre farm with his wife Carrie until his death in July 1941. In November 1942, the executors of his will conveyed the property to Abram and Edythe M. Roth (Montgomery County Deed Book 1539:445). During their half-century ownership of the farm, the Roths frequently rented their agricultural fields to local farmers, while Abram concentrated on growing a pharmacological research business headquartered in several buildings near the farmhouse and barn. The Roths eventually expanded their property to encompass 174.501 acres, which included the neighboring "Isaac Kulp Farm" on the northwestern corner of the intersection of Swedesford and Hancock Roads. It was this combination of two historic farms that the widowed Edythe Roth conveyed in 1992 to the Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture, and which now serve as components of the Roth History Museum (Montgomery County Deed Book 3342:939).

The Knipe/Johnson Farm is significant for its association with the architectural and agricultural history of Montgomery County and southeastern Pennsylvania. The central core of the residence is an example of a Georgian double-cell plan house, uncommon in once rural areas such as Gwynedd Township. Expressed through its two-over-two room plan oriented front to back, the residence is more typical of urban townhouse design of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The Pennsylvania bank barn on the property is also an uncommon type of Pennsylvania bank barn for this region of Montgomery County. Rather than following a strict German example of a "Sweitzer Barn" as expressed in the majority of barns in Upper and Lower Gwynedd townships, the barn is a modified form. While the barn does share many features of the typical Pennsylvania bank barn such as the stone gable ends, frame sides and banked entrance, it does not display a cantilevered forebay. Whether originally constructed in this manner, or altered during the early twentieth century, the barn depicts through its form, the continued importance of agriculture well into the twentieth century. Additionally, the barn does retain an element of

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“style” including frame ventilator slats on both gable ends and stone voussiors above the entrances.

Other significant man-made and landscape features on the property include the stone springhouse, c. 1940s agricultural buildings, and variety of landscape features. The stone springhouse is expressive of the early agricultural use of the property during the late eighteenth century while the c. 1940s agricultural support buildings display the continued use of the property as a farm well into the modern period. Extant landscape features are indicative of nineteenth/twentieth century agricultural practices which were dominated by the “Pennsylvania crop rotation” of Indian corn, then oats, then wheat, then grass. Changes to the property over time are reflected in the architecture and landscape and combine to lend the property its significance as a functioning farm property well into the late twentieth century.

Historically, the Knipe/Johnson Farm was a significant contributor to the agricultural heritage of the County. It is one of the last remaining properties in the township that retains its large acreage and agricultural buildings indicative of the mid-nineteenth century. The Knipe/Johnson Farm retains landscape features and manmade elements that combine to give this property a nineteenth century feeling and association as an architectural and agricultural complex. The property remains intact in a township of ever-increasing use of open-space for modern development. Aerial photographs (c. 1981) reveal that the Knipe/Johnson Farm and an adjacent farm (Isaac Kulp Farm), together constitute the last undeveloped agricultural tract in Upper Gwynedd Township.

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1870 *Agricultural Schedules.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

1880 *Agricultural Schedules.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

United States Bureau of Census

1850a *Seventh Census of the Population of the United States.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

1850b *Agricultural Schedules.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

1860 *Agricultural Schedules.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

1870 *Agricultural Schedules.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

1880 *Agricultural Schedules.* Manuscripts on Microfilm.

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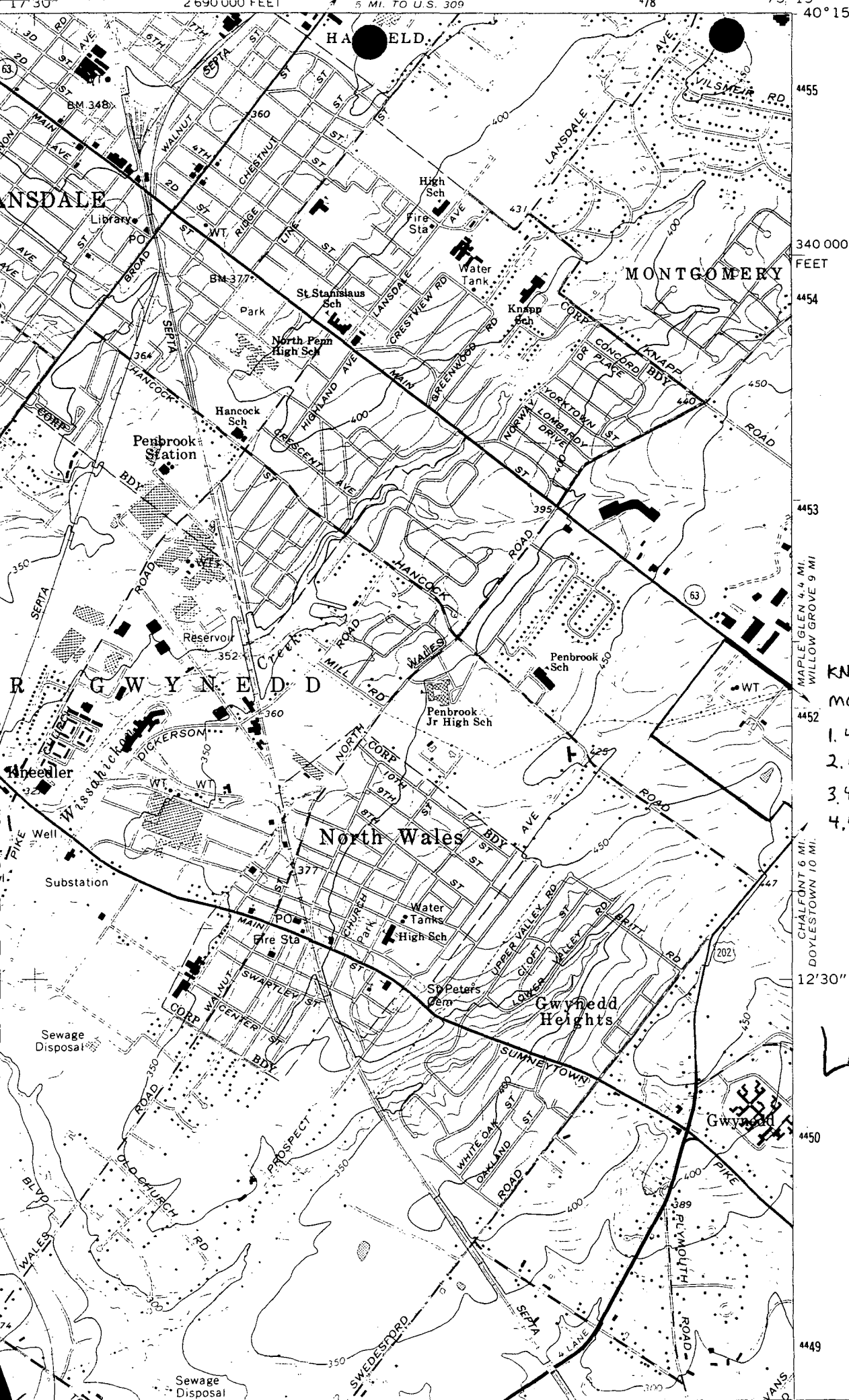
Knipe/Johnson Farm
Montgomery County, PA

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the western corner of the intersection of Dekalb Pike and Welsh Road and proceeding in a northwesterly direction along the southwestern side of Welsh Road for a distance of approximately 1900 feet. Thence proceeding in a southwesterly direction along (and including) a tree line for a distance of 2020 feet to a point on the Pennsylvania Electric Company right-of-way. Thence beginning on the southeastern side of the electric company right-of-way, and proceeding in a southeasterly directly along field edges and wooded areas for a distance of approximately 2150 feet. Thence proceeding in a northeasterly direction along the edge of wooded area for a distance of approximately 565 feet. Thence proceeding in a southeasterly direction along a tree line for a distance of 350 feet. Thence proceeding in a northeasterly direction along a tree line for a distance of 200 feet. Thence proceeding in a southeasterly direction along a tree line for a distance of 500 feet to a point on the northwestern side of Dekalb Pike (State Route 202). Thence proceeding in a northeasterly direction along said side of road continuing along the curve of the west-northwestern side of State Route 202 for a distance of 1275 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary was delineated to closely coincide with the historic property boundaries as they were drawn from c. 1832 to c. 1992 and includes 108 acres. Treelines, wooded areas, and crops define a variety of uses of the property. This boundary includes all significant resources that contribute to the property including the residence, barn, springhouse, c. 1940s outbuildings and associated landscape features.



KNIFE-JOHNSON FARM
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

- 1. 478,420; 4452315
- 2. 479100; 44518200
- 3. 478,740; 4451380
- 4. 478,080; 4451860

*Lansdale
Quadr*

40° 13' N
4455000m N

KNIFE-JOHNSON FARM
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA
478,420; 4452315
479,100; 44518200
478,740; 4451380
478,080; 4451860

Am POWER ROAD

12'30"

